

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 OMB-01 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 DRC-01

/148 W

----- 044448

R 020530Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

/AMEMBASSY SAIGON 2825

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

SECSTATE WASHDC 0292

CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 1839

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, AU, MY

SUBJECT: WHITLAM'S VISIT TO THAILAND

REF: A. BANGKOK 1832, B. FBIS BANGKOK 020540Z FEB 74 C. FBIS
BANGKOK 020530Z FEB 74

1. AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM CONTINUES TO SAY
MANY OF THE RIGHT THINGS FOR THAI CONSUMPTION (REF A),
ALTHOUGH HIS ANTI-AMERICAN TENOR MAY CAUSE RTG LEADERS
SOME PASSING DISTRESS. THE BANGKOK POST ON 2 FEBRUARY
RAN A BANNER HEADLINE: "MISTER NEW DEAL WHITLAM", (REF B)
AND DESCRIBED WHITLAM'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER SANYA
THAMMASAK AS "HISTORIC". WHITLAM, IN A SOMEWHAT MIXED
METAPHOR, FEELS THAT HE AND SANYA HAVE ESTABLISHED A "HAPPY
AND FRUITFUL TOP LEVEL RELATIONSHIP".

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2. WHITLAM, REFERRING TO LEE KUAN YEW'S STATEMENT THAT

AMERICAN FORCES SHOULD REMAIN IN THAILAND AS A "BUFFER" FORCE, SAID, "WE DON'T BELIEVE IT IS GOOD ENOUGH THAT AUSTRALIA REGARD COUNTRIES LIKE THAILAND AND HER ASIAN PARTNERS MERELY AS SOME SORT OF MILITARY BUFFER FOR AUSTRALIA'S CONVENIENCE". HE ALSO SAID THAT HE EXPECTED THERE WOULD BE NO MORE AMERICAN BOMBING RAIDS FROM THAI BASED AND DESCRIBED THE PREVIOUS BOMBING IN VIETNAM AS "MILITARILY INEFFECTIVE AND MORALLY MONSTROUS".

3. IN ITS LEAD EDITORIAL (FULL TEXT REF C), THE POST STATED:

"THE VISIT MUST BE DESCRIBED AS A SUCCESS AND THIS IS TRIBUTE TO THE WAY MR. WHITLAM HAS QUICKLY ADJUSTED HIMSELF TO THE NEEDS OF THE REGION. A YEAR AGO THE NEWSPAPER HAD TO TELL HIM TO "MIND HIS OWN BLOODY BUSINESS". TODAY WE SAY, "GOOD ON YER, MATE**"

4. COMMENT. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SO FAR FAVORABLE PRESS TREATMENT OF WHITLAM, AND THE CONSTANT PRESS INVECTIVE IN JANUARY AGAINST BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN, ILLUSTRATES TWO THESES. ONE IS THAT AUSTRALIA, WITH A SIGNIFICANT BUT MUCH SMALLER ROLE IN THAILAND, ENJOYS A LOWER AND LESS VULNERABLE PROFILE. THE OTHER IS THAT THE THAI PRESS BELIEVES THAT AUSTRALIA HAS A CLEARER READING OF THE CHANGING REALITIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, PARTICULARLY THAILAND. WHITLAM IS OFF TO CHIANGMAI TODAY. ALTHOUGH HE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE HIS DECLAMATIONS THERE, THE MOUNTAIN REMOTENESS OF PHUPING PALACE MAY SOFTEN HIS ECHO.
KINTNER

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